

Overview of Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments & Draft Urban Form Map

While the UDO has been drafted to implement the policies and actions of Raleigh's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, when the Plan was adopted in 2009, it had to work with Raleigh's existing development code, and the specific tools that would be available in the UDO were not yet known. Now that a consolidated draft of the UDO is available, it is apparent that amendments to the Comprehensive Plan will need to be adopted simultaneously with the UDO to provide policy guidance for future rezoning actions. Moreover, the UDO effectively implements a large number of Comprehensive Plan action items, meaning that these actions can be retired from the Plan, and policies which are redundant with the UDO can be modified or deleted.

The major amendments proposed to the Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

1. Section A.1 of the Land Use Element: The descriptions for the Future Land Use Categories will be rewritten to (a) reference the new UDO zoning districts; (b) remove references to density targets in the high-density and mixed-use categories; and (c) add policy guidance as to appropriate building heights.
2. Urban Design Element: A new Urban Form Map and accompanying narrative will be added to provide policy guidance for how development should relate to the public realm. Several policies will be revised to reference the map, and one new policy will be added.
3. Throughout the Plan: Completed action items will be deleted from the Plan, significantly shortening the document and the Action Matrix.

Three draft documents have been prepared as companion pieces to the UDO review:

1. Draft amendments to Section A.1 of the Land Use Element.
2. Draft amendments to the Urban Design Element.
3. A large-format version of the Urban Form Map.

Land Use

Element A: Land Use

A.1 Future Land Uses

Raleigh is a growing city both in terms of the number of residents and jobs and its physical growth and land area. Raleigh's Future Land Use Map (**Map LU-3**) builds upon the City's existing land use patterns and provides a generalized guide for development and conservation decisions. The Future Land Use Map is further defined below. For guidance on the application and use of the Future Land Use Map as it relates to zoning applications, see the text box entitled "Evaluating Zoning Proposals and Their Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan" later in this section..

- The Future Land Use Map is a generalized depiction of intended uses in the horizon year of the Comprehensive Plan, roughly 20 years in the future. It is not an "existing land use map," although in many cases future uses in an area may be the same as those that exist today.
- The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. Whereas zoning maps are parcel-specific, and establish detailed requirements for setbacks, height, use, parking, and other attributes, the land use categories of the Future Land Use Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities. By definition, the Future Land Use Map is a guide to future zoning decisions. Related, the Future Land Use Map is not intended to be referenced as part of the site plan review process, since the zoning regulations set forth the permitted uses for particular parcels.
- Streets and public rights-of-way are not an explicit land use category on the Future Land Use Map. Within any given area, the streets that pass through are assigned the same designation as the adjacent uses.

Definition of Future Land Use Categories

Raleigh's Future Land Use Map contains 19 color-coded categories that express public policy on future land uses throughout the City as described below:

RESIDENTIAL CATEGORIES

Rural Residential (1 unit per acre and under)



This category is generally mapped over areas zoned "R1RR" (or areas in the ETJ/USA with rural residential land use designations and rural County zoning) where intensification to more urban uses is not expected due to watershed constraints and existing fragmented parcel patterns. Rural Residential areas are generally developed with "ranchettes," hobby farms, estates, large-lot subdivisions, or conservation subdivisions with large common open space areas. The intent of this designation is to preserve the rural character of these areas and achieve compatible resource conservation objectives such as watershed conservation and tree protection. Gross densities in these areas would be one unit per acre or less, although clustered housing on large tracts could result in small pockets of more densely developed land.

Low Density Residential (1 – 6 units per acre)



This category encompasses most of Raleigh's single family detached residential neighborhoods, corresponding roughly to the R-2, R-4, and R-6 zoning districts (but excluding parks within these districts). It also identifies vacant or agricultural lands—in the city and in the county—where single family residential use is planned over the next 20 years. Clustered housing, duplexes, and other housing types would be consistent with this designation as long as an overall gross density not exceeding 6 units per acre was maintained. Smaller lots, townhouses and multifamily dwellings would only be appropriate as part of a conservation subdivision resulting in a significant open space set-aside. As defined in the zoning regulations, manufactured home parks could also be appropriate in this land use category.


Moderate Density Residential (6 – 1014 units per acre)




This category applies to some of the city's older single family residential neighborhoods, along with newer small lot single family subdivisions and patio home developments. Other housing types including townhouse and multifamily dwellings would be consistent with this

designation as long as an overall gross density not exceeding ~~14~~10 units per acre was maintained. Gross density in these areas would be 6 to ~~14~~10 units per acre, with higher densities only available through conservation development with a significant open space set-aside. The SPR-30 (Special Residential-30) zoning district could also be appropriate in this land use category. Other Corresponding zoning districts are R-6 and R-10.

Medium Density Residential (~~14~~ – 28 units per acre)


 This category applies to garden apartments, townhomes, condominiums, and suburban style apartment complexes. It would also apply to older neighborhoods with a mix of single-family and multi-family housing ~~with gross densities in the 14 to 28 unit per acre range.~~ RX zoning with a three-story height limit is appropriate for these areas, although five stores could be appropriate if coupled with enhance amenities, more open space, or superior design. Most of these areas are zoned R-15 and R-20.

High Density Residential (~~28 units per acre or more~~)

 This category would apply to apartment buildings and condominiums. Conforming zoning would consist of the RX district with a height limit of 5 to 12 stories, depending upon location and context. ~~districts would include R-30.~~ Other zoning districts which permit multi-family housing, appropriately conditioned, could be conforming as well. Although this is a residential category, limited ground floor retail uses (with upper story housing) may be appropriate under certain circumstances. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element policies should be consulted for additional guidance.


MIXED USE CATEGORIES:

Office Residential – Mixed Use

 This category is applied primarily to frontage lots along thoroughfares where low density residential uses are no longer appropriate, as well as office parks and developments suitable for a more mixed-use

development pattern. This category encourages a mix of ~~moderate to medium density~~ residential and office use. Retail not ancillary to employment and/or residential uses is discouraged so that retail can be more appropriately clustered and concentrated in retail and mixed-use centers at major intersections and planned transit stations. OX is the closest corresponding zoning district. The Office and Institution zones provide the closest match with the proposed use pattern, although Higher-impact uses such as hotels and hospitals are not contemplated or recommended in this land use category, except as limited uses in appropriate locations. Heights would generally be limited to three to five stores, but additional height could be contemplated for larger sites where adjacent uses would not be adversely impacted.


Neighborhood Mixed Use

 This category applies to neighborhood shopping centers and pedestrian-oriented retail districts. The service area of type of retail found these districts is generally about a one mile radius or less. Typical uses would include corner stores or convenience stores, restaurants, bakeries, supermarkets (other than super-stores/centers), drug stores, dry cleaners, video stores, small professional offices, retail banking, and similar uses that serve the immediately surrounding neighborhood. ~~While this is primarily a commercial category, Residential and mixed-use projects with upper story housing are also supported by this designation. Most of the areas mapped with this designation are currently zoned NB (Neighborhood Business) or SC (Shopping Center).~~ Where residential development complements commercial uses, it would generally be in the ~~Moderate to Medium density range (less than 28 units per acre).~~

~~Multiple zoning districts could be developed for this category in the future, recognizing that some of the designated areas are established neighborhood “main streets” and others are suburban auto-oriented shopping plazas or strip centers. Although housing would be allowed in all cases, there could be greater incentives for “vertical mixed use” or higher density housing (up to about 40 units per acre) NX is the most appropriate zoning district for these areas. Heights would generally be limited~~


to three stories, but five stories could be appropriate where these zones adjoin future transit stations, or are on traditional “walking” streets.

Community Mixed Use


 This category applies to medium-sized shopping centers and larger pedestrian-oriented retail districts such as Cameron Village. Typical commercial uses include large-format supermarkets, larger drug stores, department stores and variety stores, clothing stores, banks, offices, restaurants, movie theaters, hotels, and similar uses that draw from multiple neighborhoods. Development intensities could be higher than in Neighborhood Center areas, with mid-rise buildings as well as low rise buildings. Where residential development occurs, ground floor retail would be encouraged and minimum building heights density standards might be applied in TOD areas. Heights would generally be in the three to five story range, although additional height up to 12 stories would be appropriate in TOD areas and at the core of mixed-use centers. Densities would generally be in the Medium range (14–28 units per acre); although High Density (up to about 70 units per acre) would be appropriate around proposed transit stations and along transit-intensive corridors. Most of these areas are now zoned SC and O&I-1. A few are zoned O&I-2.

CX is the primary corresponding zoning district for these areas. Appropriate urban form standards for frontage should be applied. Multiple zoning districts could be developed for this category in the future, recognizing that some of the designated areas are established neighborhood “main streets” and others are suburban auto-oriented shopping plazas or strip centers. Although housing would be allowed in all cases, there could be greater incentives for “vertical mixed use” or higher density housing where these zones adjoin future transit stations, or are on traditional “walking” streets. For both this category and Neighborhood Mixed Use, greater height higher densities should include appropriate transitions and be accompanied by enhanced public benefits and amenities and a pedestrian-friendly relationship to the public realm.

Regional Mixed Use


 This category applies to the Triangle Town Center area, the Brier Creek area, and the North Hills/Midtown and Crabtree Centers. The intent is to identify the major retail and service hubs that draw customers from across the city. These areas may include high-density housing, office development, hotels, and region-serving retail uses such as department stores and specialty stores. These areas would typically be zoned CX. Heights could be as tall as 12 to 20 stories in core locations, but should taper down to meet the context of surrounding development. The areas with this designation are currently zoned O&I-2, SC, and TD.

Central Business District

 This category applies to the Raleigh Central Business District, and is intended to enhance Downtown Raleigh as a vibrant mixed use urban center. The category recognizes the area’s role as the heart of the city, supporting a mix of high-intensity office, retail, housing, government, institutional, visitor-serving, cultural, and entertainment uses. Multiple zoning districts might apply within the CBD, corresponding to the different character and vision for its various neighborhoods, with DX being the primary district for the mixed use core of downtown. Heights in the downtown could reach as high as 40 stories in the core, but would taper down to meet the adjacent neighborhoods at a height of three to five stories. The maximum residential density in this area would be 320 units per acre, with densities tapering off towards edge areas adjacent to established residential neighborhoods, but not falling below 40 units per acre. The closest conforming zoning district to this designation is “Bus” (Business) with DOD (Downtown Overlay District).


EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES:

Office/ Research and Development


 This category identifies major employment centers where housing is not considered an appropriate future land use. Principal uses are office parks, free-standing office buildings or corporate headquarters, banks, research and

development uses, hotels, and ancillary service businesses and retail uses that support the office economy. This category can also apply in appropriate locations to office-industrial hybrids such as light fabrication and assembly ancillary to an R&D use, flex parks, and office-distribution combinations. OP is the most appropriate zoning district for this category, although OX could be used if conditioned to restrict housing development. Most of these areas are currently zoned O&I-1, O&I-2, O&I-3, or Thoroughfare District (TD).

Business and Commercial Services


 This category is for higher-impact or “heavy” commercial activities that would not be compatible with residential uses, or that have locational needs (such as thoroughfare or interstate frontage) that are not conducive to mixed use development. Examples would include auto dealerships, auto repair and service businesses, lumberyards, nurseries, contractor suppliers, warehousing, printers, truckstops, distribution centers, and other uses that are quasi-industrial or highway-oriented in character. These areas would generally be zoned IX. Housing would be limited, but live-work units or housing combined with an employment-generating ground floor could be permitted in certain locations. Most of these areas are currently zoned TD and I-1.

General Industrial


 This category designates areas programmed for industrial land uses, including manufacturing, concrete plants and other extractive industries, junkyards/ scrap yards, and outdoor storage uses. These uses tend to have greater impacts than the commercial service uses, and may require additional buffering or separation from nearby uses. Some of these uses are dependent on rail for freight movement, and others require convenient thoroughfare or interstate access for truck deliveries and shipments. Most of these areas are zoned I-1 and I-2. Railyards, power plants, and similar uses are also included in this designation. Most of these areas should be zoned IH to prevent use conflicts with housing or retail.

PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL CATEGORIES:

Public Facilities


 This category identifies large publicly owned non-park properties, including public schools, city facilities (such as libraries, fire stations, public works yards, etc.), stadiums, state government facilities, the fairgrounds, and federal government facilities (postal distribution centers, etc.). Such sites are identified on the Future Land Use Map if they cover more than about two acres.

Institutional

 This category identifies land and facilities occupied by colleges and universities, large private schools, hospitals and medical complexes, religious organizations, and similar institutions. Smaller institutional uses such as churches are generally not mapped unless they are sites that are more than two acres in size. Institutional properties may be public or private. While institutional uses are permitted in a variety of zoning district, large institutions in a campus setting such as universities and major hospitals are appropriately zoned CP.


PARK, OPEN SPACE, AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION CATEGORIES:

Public Parks and Open Space

 This category applies to permanent open space intended for recreational or resource conservation uses. Included are neighborhood, community, and regional parks and greenways. Greenways include both existing greenway property as well as potential greenway corridors designated in the Comprehensive Plan and subject to regulation under the City code. Also included are publicly owned lands that are managed for watershed protection, resource conservation, hazard prevention, and the protection of important visual resources. Land with this designation is intended to remain in open space in perpetuity. Where potential greenway corridors are mapped (typically as buffers to streams identified in the City's Greenway Master Plan), greenway dedication will be subject to the City's code requirements

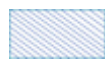
during the subdivision and site planning process, but shall not be a part of the rezoning process unless voluntarily offered.

Private Open Space

 This category includes open space that is privately owned and maintained, including private golf courses and country clubs, cemeteries, open space easements, land zoned Conservation Management, and land that should be retained in its natural state to protect public health and safety (such as floodways and steep slopes), preserve sensitive or important ecological resources (such as important tree stands), or provide a public benefit (such as watershed protection). Land with this designation may have a limited amount of development potential, and may be used for agriculture, forestry, pasture, etc. but the overall intent is to protect its open and undeveloped character through the horizon year of the Plan.


CRITICAL AREAS:

Critical Areas

 The critical areas overlay is mapped over lands that are environmentally sensitive and merit preservation and protection from development. The critical areas overlay encompasses publicly and privately owned land mostly encumbered by the 100-year floodplain. Some of this area is currently zoned Conservation Management; other portions are zoned for a wider range of use. The use of an overlay on top of another designation recognizes that while preservation is the long term goal, private landowners are entitled to a productive use of the property as allowed by the underlying zone district until such time as the appropriate steps can be taken to protect these resources.

SPECIAL STUDY AREAS:

Special Study Area

 The Future Land Use Map includes another category to identify areas where the future land use pattern has yet to be determined. These areas are outlined with a dashed line, labeled, and in some cases left “blank” (white) on the map, indicating the precise land use pattern was still under study at the time of Plan adoption. The text of the plan provides further detail.

This designation is used on large sites where land use planning studies incorporating focused community outreach are necessary to determine a preferred land use pattern. Examples include areas such as active rock quarries, landfills, large tracts outside of the City's current jurisdiction but in its future urban services area, and publicly-owned sites of particular importance. These areas should be the subject of Area Planning Studies as described under N.4 'Small Area Studies' in the Element N: 'Implementation' element.

Height in Mixed Use Land Use Categories

Table LU-2 sets forth the preferred building height ranges for the multifamily and mixed-use land use categories. This table should be used as a guide to determining appropriate building heights when property is rezoned using one of the mixed use districts in the Unified Development Ordinance. It is not intended to supersede the height permitted on any property under its current zoning. Appropriate building heights will vary based on context, and the appropriate height provided through future zoning actions should be determined based on site-specific characteristics and with reference to the relevant Comprehensive Plan Policies.

Table LU-2 Recommended Height Ranges

Category	Recommended Building Heights	
	Core/TOD	Edge/General
Medium Density Residential	5 stories	3 stories

Category	Recommended Building Heights	
	Core/TOD	Edge/General
High Density Residential	7 – 12 stories	3 – 5 stories
Neighborhood Mixed Use	5 stories	3 stories
Community Mixed Use	5 – 12 stories	3 – 5 stories
Regional Mixed Use	12 – 20 stories	3 – 5 stories
Central Business District	12 – 40 stories	3 – 5 stories
Office-Residential Mixed Use	5 – 7 stories	3 – 5 stories
Office/Research & Development	7 – 12 stories	5 stories

Policy LU 1.1

Future Land Use Map Purpose

The Future Land Use Map and associated Comprehensive Plan policies shall be used to guide zoning, ensure the efficient and predictable use of land capacity, guide growth and development, protect public and private property investments from incompatible land uses, and efficiently coordinate land use and infrastructure needs. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Policy LU 1.3

Conditional Use District Consistency

All conditions proposed as part of a conditional use district (CUD) should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Policy LU 1.2

Future Land Use Map and Zoning Consistency

The Future Land Use Map shall be used in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan policies to evaluate zoning consistency including proposed zoning map amendments and zoning text changes. ~~The Future Land Use Map shall not be used to review development applications which do not include a zoning map or text amendment.~~ See Text Box: *Evaluating Zoning Proposals and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.* (3, 4, 5, 6)

Evaluating Zoning Proposals and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The Future Land Use Map is based on the policies and assumptions contained in the Comprehensive Plan and the forecast growth for the City and region. The Future Land Use Map shows the general land use recommended and includes a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities within each land use category.

While the Future Land Use Map will influence future zoning, it does not alter current zoning or affect the right of property owners to use the land for its purpose as zoned at the time of this Plan's adoption. The Future Land Use Map will not be referenced as part of the review of development plans, including site plans and subdivisions.

The designation of an area with a particular land use category does not mean that the most intense zoning district described in the land use categories is automatically recommended. A range of densities and intensities applies within each category, and the use of different zoning districts within each category should reinforce this range and be based on infrastructure capacity, community character, protection of common open space, and prevailing density and lot size in the surrounding area.

The Future Land Use Map documents the general recommended future use for each designated area. However, other types of uses may be compatible with the designated use and deemed to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. For example, a school or duplex-style home could be found to be in conformance with the plan designation of Low-Density Residential.

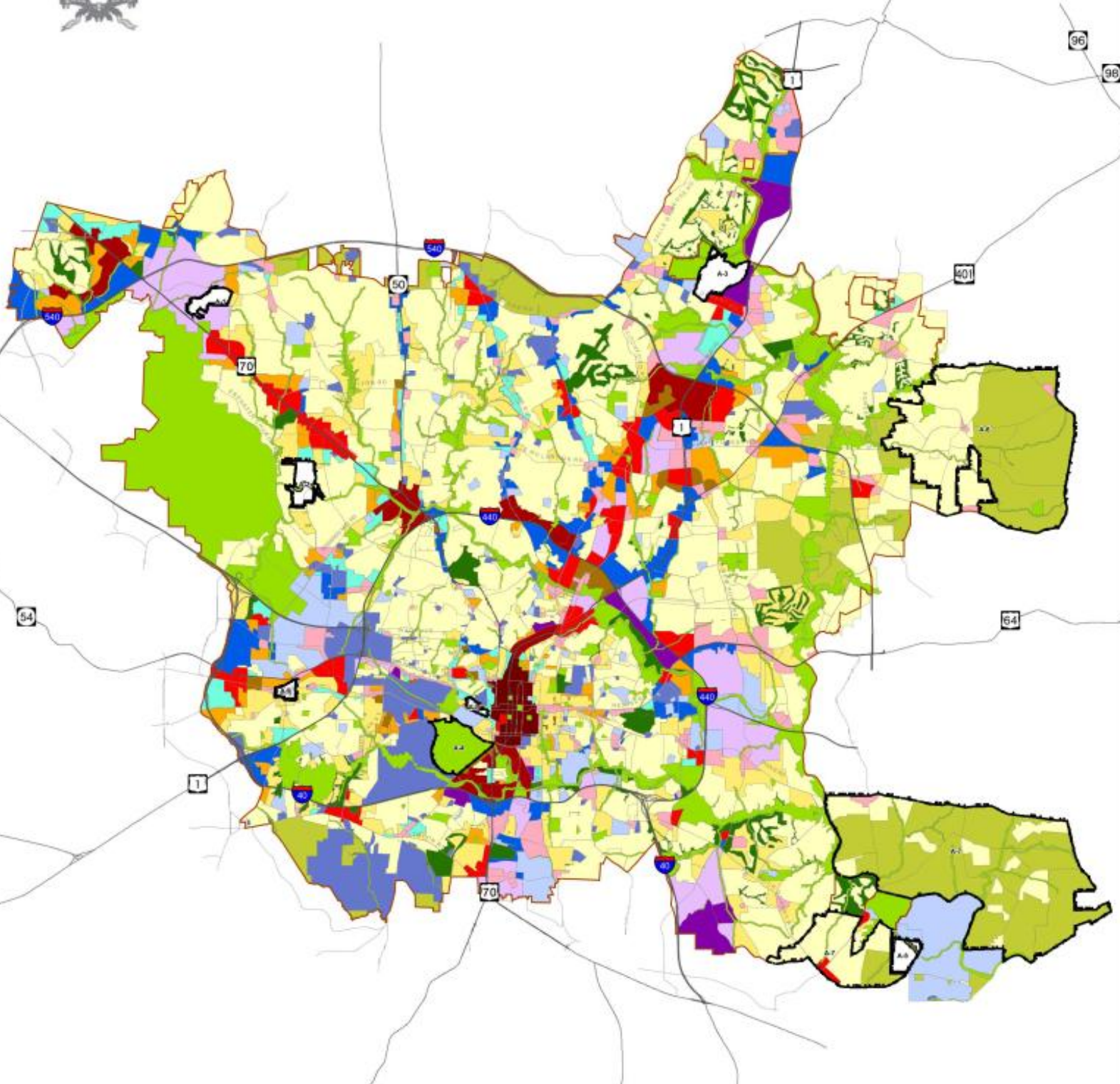
The future land use categories should not be interpreted to support nor preclude developments without consideration of the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

Site considerations relating to topography, soils, or hydrology are also important in establishing the specific use and intensity of a particular parcel on the Future Land Use Map. Similarly, the presence of adequate streets, schools, parks, and other community facilities should be assured before a development is approved that would otherwise be in conformance with the Future Land Use Map. Determination of the conformance of a proposed use or zone with the Comprehensive Plan should include consideration of the following questions:

- Is the proposal consistent with the vision, themes, and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan?
- Is the use being considered specifically designated on the Future Land Use Map in the area where its location is proposed?
- If the use is not specifically designated on the Future Land Use Map in the area where its location is proposed, is it needed to service such a planned use, or could it be established without adversely altering the recommended land use and character of the area?
- Will community facilities and streets be available at City standards to serve the use proposed for the property?



Future Land Use



MAP LU-3

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Public Parks & Open Space | Institutional |
| Private Open Space | Public Facilities |
| Rural Residential | Neighborhood Retail Mixed Use |
| Low Density Residential | Business & Commercial Services |
| Moderate Density Residential | Community Retail Mixed Use |
| Medium Density Residential | Regional Retail Mixed Use |
| High Density Residential | Central Business District |
| Office & Residential Mixed Use | General Industrial |
| Office/Research & Development | Special Study Area |

- ETJ
- Highway
- Major Streets



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Map created 10/7/2009 by the City of Raleigh
Department of City Planning & GIS Division

Action LU 1.1

Zoning Update

Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Future Land Use Map classifications and associated land use recommendations.

Action LU 1.2

Zoning Innovations

Study the incorporation of new tools into the Zoning Ordinance, such as Floor Area Ratios to control building bulk, form-based overlays and performance-based zoning.

Action LU 1.3

Special Study Area Plans

Undertake detailed land use planning in those areas designated as Special Study Areas on the Future Land Use Map before approval of development proposals or rezonings in the areas. Engage the public in the planning process.

Action LU 1.4

Future Land Use Map Maintenance and Revision

Maintain the currency of the Future Land Use Map through periodic reevaluation and revision of the map based on analysis of growth and development needs and trends, small area studies, and special area studies.

Action LU 1.5

Incorporate Adopted Regulations into Zoning

Incorporate all development regulations currently located in adopted plans into the Zoning Ordinance, including the standards from Streetscape and Parking Plans for Pedestrian Business Overlay Districts.

Action LU 1.6

Update Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations

Update the subdivision and site plan regulations to reflect that if there is a conflict between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code, the Zoning Code shall apply.

A.2 City-Wide Growth

A.3 Annexation, ETJ and USA

A.4 Land Use and Transportation Coordination

A.5 Land Use Compatibility

A.6 Mixed Use Development

A.7 Commercial Districts and Corridors

A.8 Neighborhood Conservation and Development

A.9 Research and Development/Institutional Land Uses

A.10 Retail Land Uses

A.11 Industrial Land Uses

A.12 Large Site Development

Urban Design

Element I: Urban Design

Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable, and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.

Urban design influences the physical form of the City and how residents experience public spaces such as streets, parks, plazas, or squares. The policies and actions of municipal government and the motivation of private developers largely determine the physical form of the City. While individual buildings may be attractive in themselves, there are numerous other design elements that contribute to the organization of a space including architectural design, building placement, height, scale, the layout and location of parking, and open space. The cumulative interaction of these design elements and adjacent buildings in organizing public space is vital for achieving an environment that supports and promotes social interaction.

Raleigh has many of the physical components that contribute to a successful and vibrant city, but it continues to grapple with issues of walkability and identity. The transit network planned for Raleigh's future will be the principal driver of change in the urban form and function of the City. Its effects will be most apparent around proposed rail transit stations, where high-density, mixed-use development will be required by the City. With the transit station as the focal point, additional design considerations that promote walkability, such as small block lengths, wide sidewalks, mid-block crossings, retail and restaurant uses on the ground floor, and parking garages with wrap-around retail, will be encouraged.

Frontage and Urban Design

Frontage refers to the approach a commercial, mixed-use or multifamily development takes towards the street. The parameters of frontage include the placement of the building on the site, the location of primary entrances, landscaping provided along the front of the property, and the location of parking. Frontage is a fundamental urban

design attribute, as it governs the relationship between private investment on private land, and the public's investment in the public realm.

The suburban approach to frontage, seen throughout Raleigh, emphasizes streetyard landscaping and, for retail, an abundance of front door parking. In urban settings where land is scarce and pedestrians abundant, buildings are often located at or near the front property line(s) and the quality of the frontage depends more on architecture than landscaping. A hybrid approach to frontage combines allowance for front door parking with smaller setbacks and quality pedestrian connections.

As Raleigh continues to develop and redevelop, a more urban and pedestrian-friendly approach to frontage is desired, consistent with the movement towards multimodal transportation solutions. While pedestrian-friendly designs are always welcomed, not all sites are appropriate for an urban approach to frontage. An Urban Form Map has been adopted to provide guidance as to when frontage should be directly shaped by zoning. The map is based upon the following principles:

- Urban frontage should be used in urban locations, such as downtown, pedestrian business districts, and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas to create streetwalls and a pedestrian-oriented environment. In these contexts, vehicular access and front door parking is accommodated on-street. Off-street parking is located at the sides or rear of buildings, but never between the building and the street.
- Hybrid frontage should be used in intensifying suburban areas, particularly where multi-modal investments are programmed to occur, and where on-street parking is not an option for front-door access. In such areas urban frontage, if used at all, would be confined to side or interior streets where on-street parking is an option. Elsewhere, off-street front door parking would be available but limited in depth so that pedestrian connections remain convenient and direct.
- Suburban frontage is an acceptable solution where densities are low and multi-modal

access is not anticipated to be significant within the time horizon of the plan, or where other frontage approaches are not feasible or practical. While pedestrian access and

circulation must still be accommodated, prescriptive standards for building location are not required, and front door parking is an acceptable design solution.

Urban Form Map

The Urban Form Map is comprised of centers and corridors, and includes two types of designations. Areas where frontage is recommended, and specific locations have been identified, are designated with a solid color. Areas where frontage is generally recommended, but where property-specific guidance has yet to be developed, are highlighted with a transparent color. In these areas, frontage standards would be applied either through the rezoning petition process, referencing Comprehensive Plan policies, or through future area plans.

The Urban Form map draws from a variety of sources: Area Plans, the Downtown Element of the Comprehensive Plan, areas zoned for Pedestrian Business, policy guidance found elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan, the Growth Framework Map, planned transit and streetscape investments, the presence of curb parking, and in some cases areas recognized for their distinctive character. It is anticipated that the Urban Form map will evolve and gain specificity with the completion of more area studies for specific centers and corridors.

The following text describes the centers and corridors that appear on the Urban Form Map. These areas include only a minority of property frontage in the City. Outside of these areas, frontages will comply with general ordinance requirements.

Centers

- **Downtown:** The Downtown Element boundaries define the Downtown. An urban approach to frontage is recommended throughout Downtown, and the Downtown Element provides specific guidance.
- **City Growth Centers:** These designations, based on the Growth Framework Map, are where significant infill development and redevelopment are anticipated in the future. While an urban and/or hybrid approach to frontage is recommended to encourage walkability, built conditions and site constraints may require alternative approaches. Some City Growth Centers are subject to area plans which provide frontage guidance, such as Northeast and Brier Creek.
- **Transit Oriented Districts (TODs):** TODs should utilize an urban frontage approach where possible, and a hybrid approach elsewhere to ensure a pedestrian-friendly urban form. Specific frontage recommendations will be developed as part of future TOD plans.
- **Mixed-Use Centers:** Ranging from small neighborhood retail nodes to larger mixed-use areas, this category captures special areas where a more walkable and mixed-use development pattern is desired. Some of these correspond to centers with an adopted area plan, some are established centers such as the Five Points business district, and others are activity nodes located along Transit Emphasis Corridors (see below). As additional corridor and area plans are completed, more such centers will appear on the Map.

Corridors

- **Main Streets:** This designation applies to traditional, pedestrian commercial streets, both existing (e.g. Hillsborough Street) and proposed as part of an area plan (e.g. parts of Oberlin Road). An urban frontage approach is recommended.

- **Transit Emphasis Corridors:** A subset of the Multi-Modal corridors on the Growth Framework Map, these corridors are identified in the Wake County Bus Plan and programmed for a much higher level of bus-based service, including frequent buses, amenities at every stop, the completion of the pedestrian network, and potentially traffic signal priority for transit. As these corridors are generally major thoroughfares and arterials, a hybrid approach to frontage is recommended.
- **Urban Thoroughfares:** A subset of Multi-Modal and Urban corridors on the Growth Framework map, these areas are planned or programmed for public investments such as bike lanes and or pedestrian-oriented streetscapes that encourage multiple modes. An urban or hybrid frontage approach is recommended, based on context.
- **Parkway Corridors:** These are corridors where multi-modal access is not emphasized, and a heavily landscaped approach to street frontage is either called for in adopted plans, or represents the prevailing character of the area. A suburban approach to frontage is recommended.

Primary Urban Design Issues

The Urban Design Element provides broad recommendations to address some of the primary issues that the City needs to focus on:

- Need for quality architecture to define the public realm and road network;
- Need for a connected and usable pedestrian circulation system throughout the City;
- Visual clutter and the lack of an urban identity along Raleigh's major thoroughfares;
- Need for connectivity between individual development sites;
- Commercial site design with large parking lots separating business uses from the street;
- Design needs of alternate travel modes such as transit, bicycle and walking;
- Transit accommodations, such as bus shelters, benches, trash receptacles, and landscaping. Raleigh should design a standard style for these elements to create a unique brand identity for the City;
- Obsolete provisions within the zoning code; and
- Design guidelines that do not meet the requirements or provide adequate direction for higher-density, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented urban development.

In addressing these issues and embracing the principal tenets of urban design and placemaking—such as creating compact and walkable neighborhoods with distinctive focal points, a mix of land uses with access to transit, and shared public spaces that are the center of community activity—Raleigh will be fulfilling all six of its vision themes.

Distinct neighborhoods with civic centers and complete streets⁽¹⁾ will help achieve the theme *Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities*. Coordinating new mixed-use development with the transportation and transit network will ease the burden of congestion on city streets, contributing to the vision themes of *Managing Our Growth* and *Coordinating Land Use and Transportation*. Encouraging diverse and varied neighborhoods will advance the goal of *Expanding Housing Choices*. This will also improve the variety of jobs available, and will help achieve *Economic Prosperity and Equity*. Finally, focusing on creating mixed-use neighborhoods will reduce the dependency on fossil fuels by reducing travel demand. It will also eliminate the need for extending infrastructure networks further from the center of the City, helping to preserve valuable land and natural resources. Ensuring that new buildings are energy-efficient will also go a long way towards fulfilling the vision theme of *Greenprint Raleigh*.

1 For more about 'complete streets', refer to B.3 'Complete Streets: Hierarchy and Design' in Element B: 'Transportation'.

For more information about the underlying issues and existing urban design conditions, please consult the City of Raleigh Community Inventory Report, the companion background data volume for the Comprehensive Plan.

Policies and actions in this Element appear below. Numbers indicate their relationship to the vision themes, as follows:

1. Economic Prosperity and Equity
2. Expanding Housing Choices
3. Managing Our Growth
4. Coordinating Land Use and Transportation
5. Greenprint Raleigh
6. Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities

I.1 Raleigh's Identity

A more memorable identity for Raleigh will be created in the future by enhancing the aesthetic qualities of Raleigh's corridors with a high-quality built environment, greenway network, and preserving its natural landscapes and scenic resources.

Downtown Raleigh's five local historic districts—Blount Street, Boylan Heights, Capitol Square, Moore Square, and Oakwood—represent unique residential, commercial, and institutional districts. East Raleigh/South Park, one of downtown Raleigh's national historic districts, also contributes to Raleigh's unique sense of place. This national historic district contains many residential buildings that provide integrity to downtown. It offers a window into the architectural heritage of the City's residential development.

Outside of downtown, many stable residential neighborhoods still exist along streets, such as Halifax, New Bern, and Hillsborough, with streetside planting areas and sidewalks on the axial streets. Buildings and their entrances are oriented toward the sidewalk and formal architectural elements organize the public street spaces. Early suburbs such as Cameron Park and Glenwood/Brooklyn also have very distinctive characteristics that are worth preserving and could help in establishing Raleigh's identity. Suburban residential areas are the core residential neighborhoods of the City, and additional attention to their desired form and density is required to distinguish them as Raleigh neighborhoods.

See also Element A: 'Land Use' for policies related to land use or mixed-uses.

Policy UD 1.1

Protecting Neighborhood Identity

Use Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts (NCOD), Historic Overlay Districts (HOD), or rezonings to retain the character of Raleigh's existing neighborhoods and strengthen the sense of visual order and stability. (1, 2, 3, 5, 6)

Policy UD 1.2

Architectural Features

Quality architecture should anchor and define the public realm. Elements of quality architecture include architectural accents and features conducive to pedestrian scale and usage, such as a distinct base, middle, and top (for high-rise buildings); vertical and horizontal articulation; rooflines that highlight entrances; primary entrances on the front façade; transparent storefront windows and activated uses on the ground floor; and corner buildings with defining landmark features. (1, 6) *See also Section I.2.7: Design Guidelines for additional policies and actions.*

Policy UD 1.3

Creating Attractive Facades

Well-designed building facades, storefront windows, and attractive signage and lighting should be used to create visual interest. Monolithic or box-like facades should be avoided to promote the human quality of the street. (1, 6) *See also C.8 'Light and Noise Pollution Controls'.*

Policy UD 1.4

Maintaining Facade Lines

~~Except for buildings in the Downtown and Pedestrian Business Overlays, generally~~ Maintain the established facade lines of neighborhood streets by aligning the front walls of new construction with the prevailing facades of adjacent buildings, unless doing so result in substandard sidewalks. Avoid violating this pattern by placing new construction in front of the historic facade line unless the streetscape is already characterized by such variations. Where existing facades are characterized by recurring placement of windows and doors, new construction should complement the established rhythm. (3, 6)



Policy UD 1.5

Pedestrian Wayfinding

Support the creation of a unified and comprehensive system of pedestrian wayfinding signs, kiosks, and other environmental graphics to provide directions to the pedestrian. (4, 6)

Policy UD 1.6

City Gateways

Create more distinctive and memorable gateways at points of entry to the City, and points of entry to individual neighborhoods and neighborhood centers. Gateways should provide a sense of transition and arrival, and should be designed to make a strong and positive visual impact. (6)

Policy UD 1.7

Scenic Corridors

Retain and enhance our visual and natural assets including vistas, boulevard medians, tree-lined streets, forested hillsides, wetlands, and creeks along scenic corridors into and through Raleigh, including designated Parkway Corridors on the Urban Form Map. (3, 4, 5)

Policy UD 1.8

Tree Planting and Preservation

Enhance Raleigh's image as a city of trees with a comprehensive tree planting program for every major roadway, and by protecting and preserving significant stands of existing trees along or adjacent to major roadways. (3, 4, 5) *See also C.6: 'Tree Canopy Conservation and Growth' in Element C: 'Environmental Protection'.*

Policy UD 1.9

Skyline Views

Views of the evolving downtown skyline from downtown gateway corridors should be preserved. Public and private investments should take advantage of opportunities to create new skyline views. (3, 4)

Policy UD 1.10

Frontage

Coordinate frontage across multiple sites to create cohesive places. Encourage consistency with the designations on the Urban Form Map. Development in centers and along corridors targeted for public investment in transit and walkability should use a compatible urban form. See the text box on the Urban Form Map in the Overview section for more guidance. (3, 4, 6)

Action UD 1.1

Downtown Wayfinding Improvements

Implement the recommendations of the Downtown Raleigh Wayfinding Study, and expand its scope to incorporate other mixed-use areas in the City.

Action UD 1.2

Falls of Neuse Corridor

Maintain and protect the character of the Falls of Neuse corridor adjacent to the Falls Lake watershed north of Durant Road by preserving the extensive roadside vegetation, the Falls Lake dam, and Falls Community.

Action UD 1.3

U.S. 401 Corridor

Preserve and protect the visual resources associated with the historic, residential, and rural atmosphere of the U.S. 401 corridor through the use of tools such as frontage standards.

Action UD 1.4

Gateway Design in Focus Areas

Develop special gateway design treatment for focus areas, such as the three crossings of the Neuse River: Capital Boulevard, Louisburg Road, and New Bern Avenue.

Action UD 1.5

New Bern Avenue Planting Guidelines

Use tree types and planting locations on New Bern Avenue that avoid obscuring the view of the Capitol.

Action UD 1.6

Using Zoning to Achieve Design Goals

Explore zoning and other regulatory techniques to promote excellence in the design of new buildings and public spaces. ~~Zoning should include incentives or requirements for facade features, window placement, courtyards, buffering, and other exterior architectural elements that improve the compatibility of structures, including~~

roof structures, with their surroundings while promoting high architectural quality.

I.2 Design of Mixed-Use Developments

Walkable mixed-use developments are critical to the future of urban planning in Raleigh and cities around the world. They are efficient in terms of land use and urban service delivery. They encourage the use of mass transit and help in the preservation of open space. They create active and vibrant urban spaces. By encouraging new mixed-use neighborhoods to also be mixed-income neighborhoods, the City can ensure that low- and moderate- income residents have equal access to all the advantages and opportunities of urban living.

Good urban design helps promote and implement the ideals of mixed-use neighborhoods. Residential uses should be connected to retail uses and transit through safe and attractive sidewalks that are universally accessible. Shared open spaces should be welcoming, well-lit, and equipped to serve a diverse group of users. Transit stops should function efficiently and protect riders from the elements during all seasons.

See also Element A: 'Land Use' for additional policies related to mixed-use and land use and transportation coordination.

Policy UD 2.1

Building Orientation

Buildings in mixed-use developments should be oriented along streets, plazas, and pedestrian ways. Their facades should create an active and engaging public realm. (4, 6)

Policy UD 2.2

Multi-modal Design

Mixed-use developments should accommodate all modes of transportation to the greatest extent possible. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Policy UD 2.3

Activating the Street

New retail and mixed-use centers should activate the pedestrian environment of the street frontage in addition to internal pedestrian networks and connections, particularly along designated Main Street corridors. (4, 6)

Policy UD 2.4

Transitions in Building Intensity

Establish gradual transitions between large-scale and small-scale development. ~~The relationship between taller, more visually prominent buildings and lower, smaller buildings (such as single-family or row houses) can be made more pleasing when the transition is gradual rather than abrupt.~~ The relationship can be further-improved by designing larger buildings to reduce their apparent size and recessing the upper floors of the building to relate to the lower scale of the adjacent properties planned for lower density. (6)
See also A.6: 'Land Use Compatibility' in Element A: Land Use for additional policies and actions related to transitions.

Policy UD 2.5

Greenway Access

Safe and clearly marked access points to the City's greenway system should be provided in new and existing mixed-use centers where feasible. (4, 5, 6)

Policy UD 2.6

Parking Location and Design

New surface parking lots should be avoided within mixed-use centers. Instead, shared parking garages with active ground floor uses and architectural treatments for all facades visible from a public right-of-way should be used. (4, 6)



Policy UD 2.7

Public Open Space

Usable and well-appointed urban public open space should be provided within mixed-use centers to serve as focal points and community gathering spots. (6)

Action UD 2.1

Regulatory Barriers to Mixed Use

Reevaluate the requirements in the development code for separation of uses, transitional protective yards, and large setbacks to allow alternate means of compliance for landscape requirements and encourage connectivity of public spaces.

Action UD 2.2

Stepbacks for Taller Buildings

During the update of the City's development regulations, consider additional stepbacks for multi-story buildings based on the height of the building.

I.3 Appearance and Function of Raleigh's Corridors

The appearance of Raleigh's commercial corridors, especially U.S. 1, New Bern, U.S. 70, Hillsborough, and South Saunders, has been detrimental to the City's image. As primary entry corridors for visitors to the City, it is essential that these roadways convey a positive impression. There is also a need to mitigate air and noise pollution. The creation of boulevards with landscaped medians, street trees, and sidewalks will greatly improve the appearance of Raleigh's corridors, mitigate air and noise pollution, and address the needs of pedestrians and transit users. Raleigh's existing streets must be retrofit to accommodate the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users of all ages and abilities.

For more information about complete streets, refer to B.3 'Complete Streets: Hierarchy and Design' in Element B: 'Transportation'.

Policy UD 3.1

Gateway Corridor Design Quality

Promote high quality development along gateway corridors to improve aesthetics and encourage higher levels of investment. Design of new development should contribute to the overall visual quality of the corridor and define the street space. (1, 4, 6)

Policy UD 3.2

Highlighting Important Intersections

Promote the use of gateways and landmarks to highlight access points and important intersections along key corridors. Examples include the places where roadways split to become one-way pairs entering and exiting downtown (Blount-Person, Wilmington-Salisbury, McDowell-Dawson); the proposed roundabouts along Hillsborough Street at Rosemary, Pullen, and Morgan streets; and places where key thoroughfares merge (Louisburg-Capital, Wake Forest-Falls of Neuse, etc.). (4, 6)

Policy UD 3.3

Strip Shopping Centers

Ensure that zoning and parking standards discourage strip commercial shopping centers and auto-oriented building designs along Main Street and Transit Emphasis Corridors, and in City Growth, TOD and Mixed-Use Centers on the Urban Form Map. (3, 4, 6)

Policy UD 3.4

Enhanced Streetwalls

Promote a higher standard of storefront design and architectural detail in Downtown and along the City's Main Street corridors. Along walkable shopping streets, create street walls with relatively continuous facades built to the front lot line to provide a sense of enclosure and improve pedestrian comfort. (4, 6)



Policy UD 3.5

Visually Cohesive Streetscapes

Create visually cohesive streetscapes using a variety of techniques including landscaping, undergrounding of utilities, and other streetscape improvements along street frontages that reflect adjacent land uses. (5, 6)

Policy UD 3.6

Median Plantings

Median plantings should be used where feasible and appropriate to preserve and enhance the visual character of corridors and boulevards. (5, 6)

Policy UD 3.7

Parking Lot Placement

New parking lots on designated ~~Urban or Multi-modal~~ Main Street and Transit Emphasis corridors on the Growth Framework Map should be ~~generally~~ located at the side or rear of buildings when on-street parking is available, with only limited front door parking provided elsewhere. Where feasible, ~~existing~~ parking lots abutting these on-such corridors should be landscaped to create a pedestrian-friendly streetscape with business visibility. (1, 4, 5, 6) *See also B.6 'Parking Management' in Element B: 'Transportation' for additional policies and actions.*

Policy UD 3.8

Screening of Unsightly Uses

The visibility of trash storage, loading, and truck parking areas from the street, sidewalk, building entrances and corridors should be minimized. These services should not be located adjacent to residential units and useable open space. (1, 3, 6)

Policy UD 3.9

Parking Lot Design

Encourage efficient site design, shared parking between complementary uses, and reduced amounts of impervious surface in parking lot design. (1, 4, 5, 6)

Policy UD 3.10

Planting Requirements

Enhance and expand the required planting and tree coverage for parking lots by incorporating design standards that promote long term tree growth and health. Planting standards should improve permeability and reduce the heat island effect. (4, 5, 6)

Policy UD 3.11

Parking Structures

Encourage creative solutions including landscaping and other aesthetic treatments to design and retrofit parking structures to minimize their visual prominence. Where feasible, the street side of parking structures should be lined with active and visually attractive uses to lessen their impact on the streetscape. (4, 6)

Action UD 3.1

~~Corridor Overlay Districts~~

~~Develop Corridor Overlay Districts to implement the intended development pattern along Multi-modal, Urban and Parkway corridors.~~

Action UD 3.2

Undergrounding Utilities

Underground utility lines as part of long-term corridor design plans. *See also G.6 'Energy and Telecommunications' in Element G: 'Public Utilities'.*

Action UD 3.3

Parking Lot Design Standards

Revise zoning regulation provisions for parking lot design, including location relative to building placement, pervious and impervious surfaces, screening, and shade tree coverage. Regulations for parking lot landscaping should maximize the potential for tree growth.

Action UD 3.4

Interstate Signage

Coordinate directional and service information signage on I-440 and I-540 with NCDOT to improve visitors' orientation around the City.

Policy UD 4.1

Public Gathering Spaces

Encourage the development of public gathering spaces within all developments. Such spaces should be designed to attract people by using common and usable open space, an enhanced pedestrian realm, streetscape activation, and retail uses. (1, 4, 5, 6)

Policy UD 4.2

Streets as Public Spaces

Design streets as the main public spaces scaled for pedestrian use within City Growth, TOD Regional, and Mixed-use Centers as designated on the Urban Form Growth Framework Map. (6)

I.4 Creating Inviting Public Spaces

The network of public spaces – streets, squares, plazas, parks, and sidewalks – that connect residents in their daily lives most clearly define a city. The character of public spaces is formed by the arrangement and details of the elements that define them such as building edges, public squares, and storefronts along a commercial street or dwellings that line a residential avenue.

City-owned parks and greenways are considered to be the key public spaces designed to be used by the broader community. Their role has been central to the vision of the City of Raleigh. However, smaller gathering spaces such as plazas, streets, and sidewalks have not been used to their best capacity, and can be improved to better serve the community.

Policy UD 4.3

Improving Streetscape Design

Improve the appearance and identity of Raleigh's streets through the design of street lights, paved surfaces, landscaped areas, bus shelters, street "furniture," and adjacent building facades. (1, 4, 6)

Policy UD 4.4

Management of Sidewalk Space

Manage Raleigh's sidewalk space in a way that promotes pedestrian safety, efficiency, and comfort and provides adequate space for tree boxes. Sidewalks should enhance the visual character of streets, with landscaping and buffer planting used to reduce the impacts of vehicle traffic. (6)

Policy UD 4.5

Improving the Street Environment

Create attractive and interesting commercial streetscapes by promoting ground level retail and desirable street activities, making walking more comfortable and convenient, ensuring that sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic, minimizing curb cuts and driveways, and avoiding windowless facades and gaps in the street wall. (4, 6)

The essential ingredients of a good public space include landscaping, furniture, and people.



Policy UD 4.6

Activated Public Space

Provide urban squares, public plazas, and similar areas that stimulate vibrant pedestrian street life and provide a focus for community activities. Encourage the “activation” of such spaces through the design of adjacent structures; for example, through the location of shop entrances, window displays, awnings, and outdoor dining areas. (6)

Policy UD 4.7

Indoor/Outdoor Transitions

Encourage private owners to take the “indoors” outdoors by extending interior space like dining areas and small merchandise displays onto walkways and plazas. Conversely, outdoor spaces should be integrated into the building by opening interior spaces like atriums to views, sunshine, and public use. (1, 6)

Policy UD 4.8

Private Sector Public Space Improvements

As appropriate and necessary, require publicly accessible plazas or open spaces to be provided by the private sector in conjunction with development or redevelopment of multi-family, commercial, or mixed-used developments. (5, 6)

Policy UD 4.9

Drought-Tolerant Landscaping

Encourage the use of native, drought-resistant plants, and other xeriscaping techniques in landscaping public spaces (xeriscaping is landscaping which does not require irrigation). (5, 6) *See also G.3 'Drinking Water' in Element G: 'Public Utilities' for additional policies and actions on drought-tolerant landscaping.*

Policy UD 4.10

Improving Pedestrian Safety

Improve pedestrian safety by providing clear transitions between vehicular and pedestrian areas through landscaping and other streetscape improvements. (4, 5, 6)
See also Section B.6: 'Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation' in Element B: 'Transportation' for additional policies and actions.

Action UD 4.1

Open Space Standards

Revise the site plan standards for new developments and redevelopment of existing sites to incorporate requirements for providing public plazas or publicly-accessible open spaces.

I.5 Designing Successful Neighborhoods

Raleigh's existing and new neighborhoods must be retrofit to meet the changing demands of the economy and environment. Auto-oriented suburbs without sidewalks or access to transit are lifestyle choices that the City must discourage, focusing instead on housing and transportation choices that promote sustainability. Raleigh's neighborhoods, prior to the easy availability of the automobile, provided urban design features that were sustainable, such as street trees, wide sidewalks, smaller buildings, and shared public spaces. In order to meet the challenges of global climate change and rising fuel and energy costs, a return to an environmentally-sustainable and responsible lifestyle is in order, as outlined by the policies below.

See also A.5 'Land Use Compatibility' in Element A: 'Land Use' for additional policies and actions related to Infill Development.

Policy UD 5.1

Contextual Design

Proposed development within established neighborhoods should create or enhance a distinctive character that relates well to the surrounding area. (6)

Policy UD 5.2

Pedestrian Access to Downtown

Enhance clear and safe pedestrian networks and connections between downtown and nearby center city neighborhoods. (4, 6)

Policy UD 5.3

Improving Neighborhood Connectivity

Explore opportunities to conveniently connect existing neighborhoods to adjacent commercial centers and community facilities and services. (4, 6)

Policy UD 5.4

Neighborhood Character and Identity

Strengthen the defining visual qualities of Raleigh's neighborhoods. This should be achieved in part by relating the scale of infill development, alterations, renovations, and additions to existing neighborhood context. (6)

Policy UD 5.5

Areas of Strong Architectural Character

Preserve the architectural continuity and design integrity of historic districts and other areas of strong architectural character. New development within such areas does not need to replicate prevailing architectural styles exactly but should be complementary in form, height, and bulk. (6) *See also Element J: 'Historic Preservation' for additional policies and actions related to historic districts.*

Policy UD 5.6

Protection of Neighborhood Open Space

Infill development should respect and improve the integrity of neighborhood open spaces and public areas. Buildings should be designed to avoid the loss of sunlight and reduced usability of neighborhood parks and plazas. (6)

Action UD 5.1

LEED-ND Program

Implement the new LEED Neighborhood Design (ND) certification program (currently under development by the U.S. Green Building Council) for neighborhoods as a possible new strategy to reduce energy and resource consumption and improve the long-term sustainability of Raleigh.

Action UD 5.2

Retaining Landscaping

Require that new construction or additions retain existing landscaping and vegetation to the greatest extent possible.

1.6 Pedestrian-Friendly Design

Raleigh's pedestrian network is strongest within downtown, Planned Development Districts, pedestrian business ~~Overlay~~ districts/Main Streets, and mixed-use centers. In other parts of the City, pedestrian connections are often missing. While the development code provides for the dedication of adequate open space, sidewalks, tree conservation, and connectivity, these issues are addressed on a site-by-site basis rather than in a comprehensive network-based approach. In some cases, the development code actually impedes connectivity by requiring separation of uses and transitional protective yards.

Pedestrian-friendly design not only encourages social engagement and active urban spaces, it has been proven to promote the health and well-being of residents. Obesity and obesity-related diseases such as hypertension and diabetes are a national concern today. Ensuring that all future development within the City is pedestrian-friendly will encourage residents to walk more frequently to meet their daily needs. This will also help in reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and help the City to uphold its commitment to implement the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

See also B.5 'Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation' in Element B: 'Transportation' for additional actions and policies related to pedestrian-friendly design.

Policy UD 6.1

Encouraging Pedestrian-Oriented Uses

New development, streetscape, and building improvements in Downtown, ~~pedestrian business districts~~ Main Streets and TOD areas should promote high intensity, pedestrian-oriented use and discourage automobile-oriented uses and drive-through uses. (4, 6)



Policy UD 6.2

Ensuring Pedestrian Comfort and Convenience

Promote a comfortable and convenient pedestrian environment by requiring that buildings face the sidewalk and street area, avoid excessive setbacks, and provide direct pedestrian connections. On-street parking should be provided along the pedestrian-oriented streets and surface parking should be to the side or in the rear. This should be applied in new development, wherever feasible, especially on Transit Emphasis and Main Street urban corridors and in mixed-use centers. (4, 6)

Policy UD 6.3

Pedestrian Scale Lighting

Ensure that pedestrian-scale lighting is provided as a means of providing a safe and visible pedestrian realm as well as establishing a theme or character for different streets and neighborhoods. (6)

See also C.8 'Light and Noise Pollution Controls'.

Policy UD 6.4

Appropriate Street Tree Selection

Street tree plantings should be appropriate to the function of the street. For example:

- Trees on commercial streets should complement the face of the buildings;
- Trees on residential streets should shade both the street and sidewalk, and serve as a visual buffer between the street and the home; and
- In high traffic areas and downtown, trees should be planted in tree wells with grates over the top to protect the roots. (5, 6)

Action UD 6.1

New Planting Techniques

Study and integrate new planting techniques in streetscape design including wider planting/landscape strips between the curb and sidewalk and tree pits that will extend tree life.

Action UD 6.2

Street Tree Provisions

Update design standards and zoning regulation provisions to incorporate appropriate requirements for the selection, placement, and spacing of street trees.

I.7 Design Guidelines

Urban design guidelines help promote coordinated and high quality development and enhance the public realm and the City's image. In Raleigh, a number of guidelines were included in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan. There also exist numerous other design guidelines outside the 1989 Comprehensive Plan (See Text Box: *Guidelines*). As part of the planning effort for the Comprehensive Plan, a thorough audit of all the existing guidelines was undertaken to determine which guidelines should become part of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. As a result of the sheer number and complexity of the existing guidelines, the age of some of the guidelines, and the overlap between the guidelines and zoning regulations, the audit resulted in a substantially shortened list of guidelines for inclusion. Relevant citywide design guidelines are contained in **Table UD-1**, while downtown-specific guidelines are located in M.7 'Urban Design' in Element M: 'Downtown Raleigh'. These guidelines replace and supersede prior adopted guidelines.

The policies below contain broad guiding principles that should influence the review of all new development in the City, as well as guidance regarding the application of the **Design Guidelines for Mixed-Use Areas** listed at the end of this section.

Guidelines

Raleigh's 1989 Comprehensive Plan included a Guidelines Element that provided guidance on the design of various urban form elements. The guidelines included were:

- Frontage Lots on Thoroughfares Guidelines, adopted 1981;

- Focus Area Height Guidelines, adopted 1987;
- Office Floor Area Ratio and Building Lot Coverage Guidelines, included in the 1989 adoption of the 2020 Plan;
- Transit Oriented Development, included in the 1989 adoption of the 2020 Plan;
- Retail Use Guidelines, adopted 1991;
- Regional Center Urban Design Guidelines, included in the 1998 Update of the 2020 Plan;
- Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Neighborhood and Village Centers, adopted 2002; and
- Transit Oriented Development Guidelines, adopted 2004.

While most of these guidelines were developed in response to an identified need at the time, and have been useful in addressing those issues, many are now obsolete or have been superseded. A good example is the Transit Oriented Development Guidelines adopted in 1989. These were superseded by the Transit Oriented Development Guidelines in 2004, but had not been removed from the 1989 Comprehensive Plan as of 2008. Similarly, the Office Floor Area Ratio and Building Lot Coverage Guidelines are no longer used since the information overlaps the Zoning Code, in which case the Code takes precedence.

In addition to the Guidelines included in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, there also exist numerous other design guidelines, including:

- Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts;
- Downtown Streetscape Master Plan;
- Fayetteville Street Downtown Urban Design Handbook;
- Guidelines for Exterior Rehabilitation for the Moore Square Historic District;
- Raleigh Downtown Urban Design Guidelines;
- Standards for Private Use of Public Spaces: A Downtown Urban Design Handbook; and
- Streets, Sidewalks, and Driveway Access Handbook.

Policy UD 7.1

Economic Value of Quality Design

Recognize and emphasize the economic value of quality design in redevelopment, infill, adaptive use of existing structures, and development of public spaces. (1, 6)

Policy UD 7.2

Promoting Quality Design

Promote quality urban design through the use of design standards, zoning regulations, promotional materials, design awards, programs, and competitions. (6)

Policy UD 7.3

Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines in **Table UD-1** shall be used to review rezoning petitions and development applications for mixed-use developments; or rezoning petitions and development applications along Main Street and Transit emphasis corridors or in City Growth, TOD and Mixed-Use centers in mixed-use areas such as Pedestrian Business Overlay Districts and mixed-use designations on the Future Land Use Map, including preliminary site plans and development plans, petitions for the application of the Pedestrian Business or Downtown Overlay Districts, Planned Development Districts, and Conditional Use zoning petitions. (4, 6)

Action UD 7.1

Lighting Standards

Review and revise development regulations regarding the design, number, and placement of light fixtures, and their co-location with other streetscape elements on single poles (i.e. street lighting, pedestrian lighting, and banners).

Action UD 7.2

Zoning Code Review

Re-evaluate provisions of the City's Zoning Code related to overlay districts, development, and sign regulations to improve standards related to design.

Action UD 7.3

Streets, Sidewalks, and Driveway Access Handbook Revision

Revise the Streets, Sidewalks, and Driveway Access Handbook to:

- Revise the sidewalk widths for different uses and contexts;
- Include pedestrian-oriented design standards including maximum distance between crosswalks and high-visibility markings at intersections;
- Differentiate between various designations of streets as defined on the Growth Framework Map;
- Differentiate between corridors that are programmed to be transit-intensive; and
- Revise street cross sections to enhance the distance between the curb and sidewalk to allow street tree planting.

See also B.5 'Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation' in Element B: 'Transportation' for additional actions and policies regarding pedestrian-oriented design.

Action UD 7.4

Transit Supportive Design Guidelines

Codify relevant design guidelines as standards that support transit and other modes of travel. Such standards should be applied in the development review process in mixed-use centers and along multi-modal transportation corridors.

Action UD 7.5

Siting of Service Equipment

Develop standards for the location of transformers and HVAC equipment and other building-mounted, non-street utility meters and service equipment. These standards should address the relation of such structures to buildings and public spaces, as well as suggestions for screening.

Action UD 7.6

Sign Ordinance Revisions

Re-evaluate and revise the City's sign ordinance. Signage should be human scale and serve both pedestrians and automobiles.

Action UD 7.7

PBOD and PD-CU Overlay Revisions

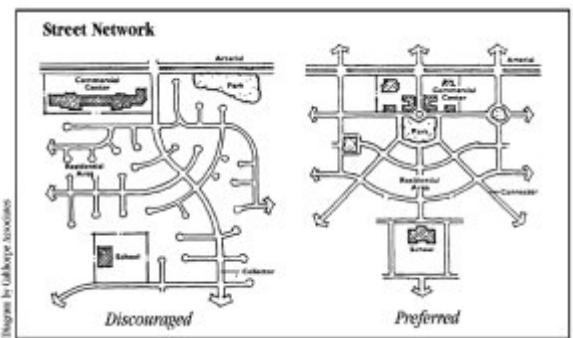
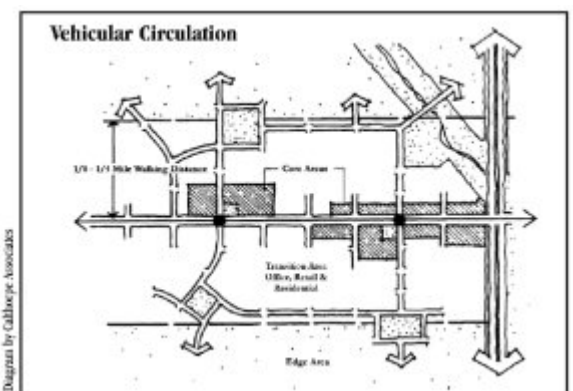
Revise the zoning regulations for the Pedestrian Business Overlay District and the Planned Development Conditional Use Overlay District to make the application and amendment process more efficient and less onerous.



Action UD 7.8


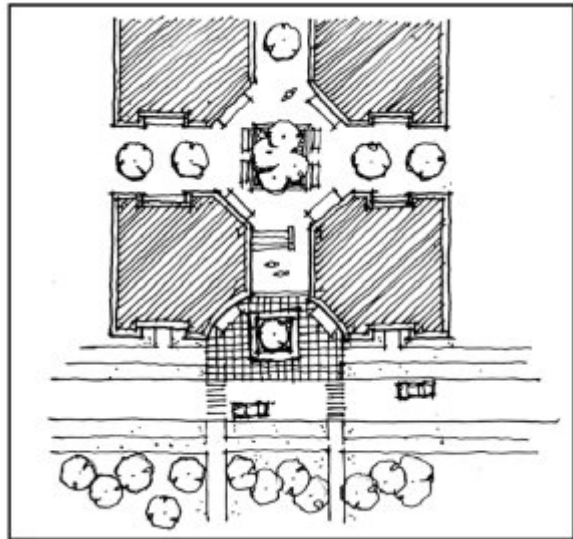
Unity of Development

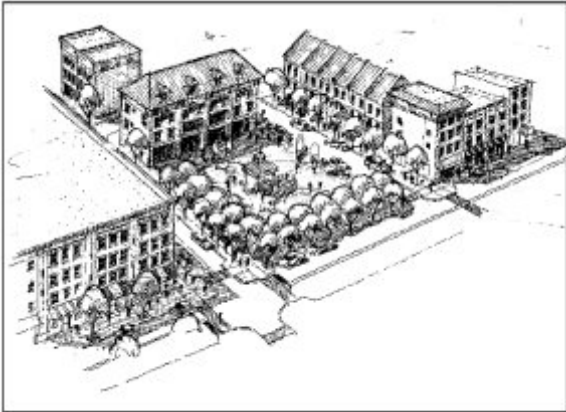

Revise the Unity of Development regulations to allow for more diversity in the styles and materials of new construction.


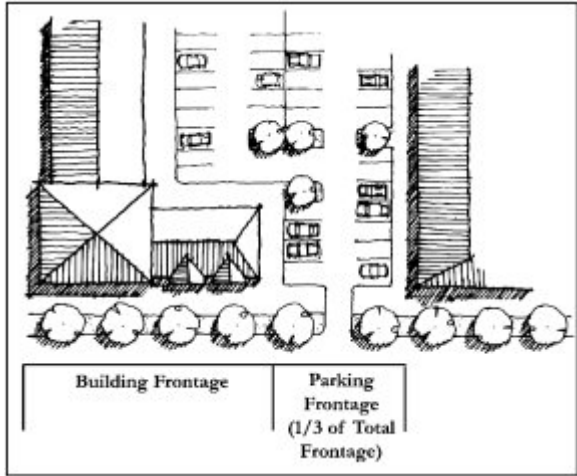
Table UD-1 Design Guidelines for Mixed-Use Developments



#	Guideline
Elements of Mixed-use Areas	
1	All mixed-use developments should generally provide retail (such as eating establishments, food stores, and banks), and other uses such as office, and residential uses within walking distance of each other. Mixed uses should be arranged in a compact and pedestrian-friendly form.
Mixed-use Areas/Transition to Surrounding Neighborhoods	
2	Within all mixed-use areas, buildings that are adjacent to lower density neighborhoods should transition (height, design, distance, and/or landscaping) to the lower heights or be comparable in height and massing.
Mixed-use Areas/The Block, The Street, and The Corridor	
3	<p>A mixed use area's road network should connect directly into the neighborhood road network of the surrounding community, providing multiple paths for movement to and through the mixed use area. In this way, trips made from the surrounding residential neighborhood(s) to the mixed use area should be possible without requiring travel along a major thoroughfare or arterial.</p> 
4	<p>Streets should interconnect within a development and with adjoining development. Cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets are generally discouraged except where topographic conditions and/or exterior lot line configurations offer no practical alternatives for connection or through traffic. Street stubs should be provided with development adjacent to open land to provide for future connections. Streets should be planned with due regard to the designated corridors shown on the Thoroughfare Plan.</p> 
5	New development should be comprised of blocks of public and/or private streets (including sidewalks). Block faces should have a length generally not exceeding 660 feet. Where commercial driveways are used to create block structure, they should include the same pedestrian amenities as public or private streets.
Site Design/Building Placement	

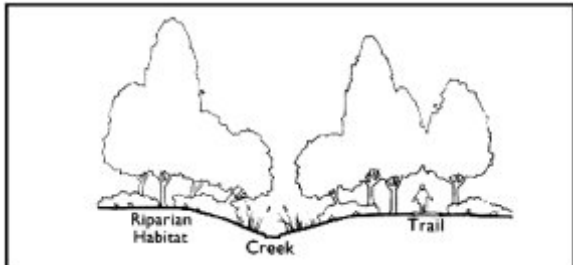
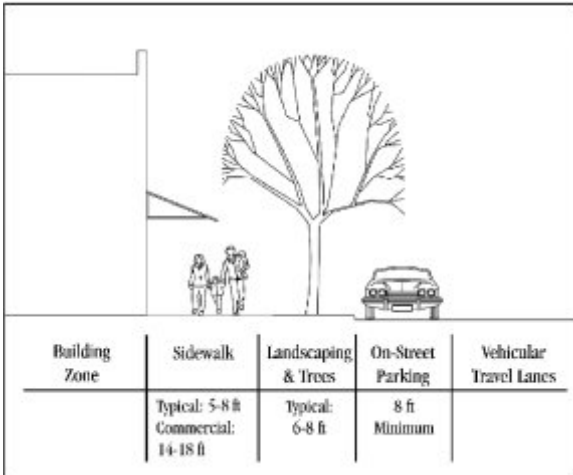
#	Guideline
6	<p>A primary task of all urban architecture and landscape design is the physical definition of streets and public spaces as places of shared-use. Streets should be lined by buildings rather than parking lots and should provide interest especially for pedestrians. Garage entrances and/or loading areas should be located at the side or rear of a property.</p>
7	<p>Buildings should be located close to the pedestrian-oriented street (within 25-feet of the curb), with off-street parking behind and/or beside the buildings. When a development plan is located along a high volume corridor without on-street parking, one bay of parking separating the building frontage along the corridor is a preferred option.</p> 
8	<p>If the site is located at a street intersection, the main building of a complex, or main part of a single building should be placed at the corner. Parking, loading, or service should not be located at an intersection.</p> <p>Locate buildings on the corner to create pedestrian interest and reduce the visual impact of parking</p> 

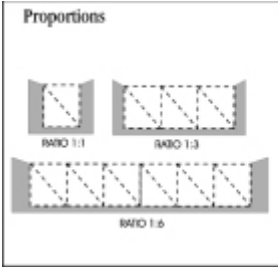
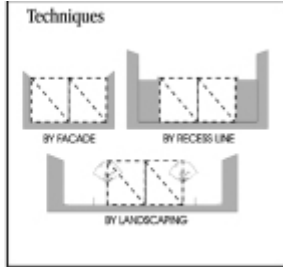
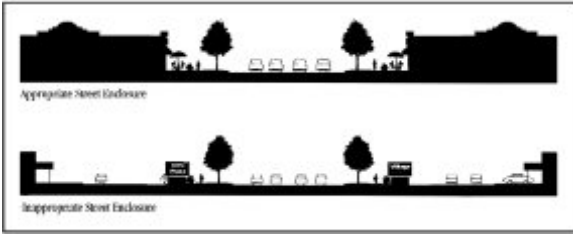
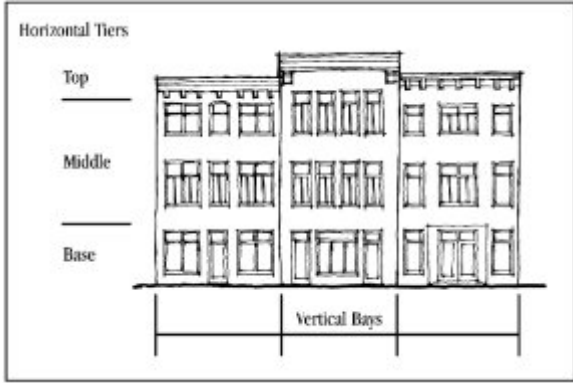
#	Guideline	
Site Design/Urban Open Space		
9	<p>To ensure that urban open space is well-used, it is essential to locate and design it carefully. The space should be located where it is visible and easily accessible from public areas (building entrances, sidewalks). Take views and sun exposure into account as well.</p>	<p>Squares are bound by buildings and create public gathering places for special events and casual interaction</p> 
10	<p>New urban spaces should contain direct access from the adjacent streets. They should be open along the adjacent sidewalks and allow for multiple points of entry. They should also be visually permeable from the sidewalk, allowing passersby to see directly into the space.</p>	<p>Internal public space must be designed properly to be safe and usable, providing wide pathways and elements such as fountains and seating.</p> 

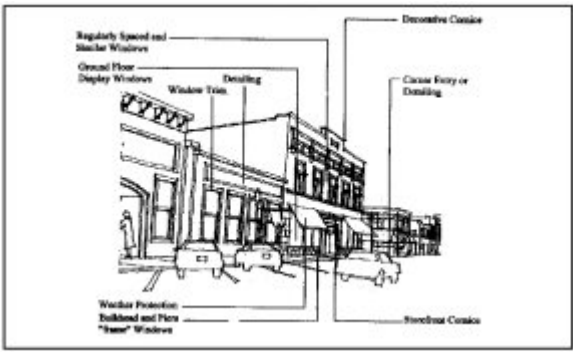
#	Guideline
11	<p>The perimeter of urban open spaces should consist of active uses that provide pedestrian traffic for the space including retail, cafés, and restaurants and higher-density residential.</p> <p>A public space that is enclosed by active buildings around its perimeter encourages its use and maintains its safety.</p> 
12	<p>A properly defined urban open space is visually enclosed by the fronting of buildings to create an outdoor “room” that is comfortable to users.</p>
Site Design/Public Seating	
13	<p>New public spaces should provide seating opportunities.</p> <p>Movable chairs give people the flexibility to adapt public spaces to their immediate needs.</p> 

#	Guideline
Site Design/Automobile Parking	
14	<p>Parking lots should not dominate the frontage of pedestrian-oriented streets, interrupt pedestrian routes, or negatively impact surrounding developments.</p> <p>When a parking lot is adjacent to a street, screen it using a wall and/or landscaping.</p> 
15	<p>Parking lots should be located behind or in the interior of a block whenever possible. Parking lots should not occupy more than 1/3 of the frontage of the adjacent building or not more than 64 feet, whichever is less.</p> 

#	Guideline	
16	<p>Parking structures are clearly an important and necessary element of the overall urban infrastructure but, given their utilitarian elements, can have serious negative visual effects. New structures should merit the same level of materials and finishes as that a principal building would, care in the use of basic design elements can make a significant improvement.</p>	<p>Parking structures should be placed in mid-block and wrapped with finer buildings that provide active retail storefronts.</p> 
Site Design/Transit Stops		
17	<p>Higher building densities and more intensive land uses should be within walking distance of transit stops, permitting public transit to become a viable alternative to the automobile.</p>	<p>Bus stops should be architecturally integrated with the surrounding development and provide such basic amenities and shelter and seating.</p> 
18	<p>Convenient, comfortable pedestrian access between the transit stop and the building entrance should be planned as part of the overall pedestrian network.</p>	

#	Guideline			
Site Design/Environmental Protection				
19	All development should respect natural resources as an essential component of the human environment. The most sensitive landscape areas, both environmentally and visually, are steep slopes greater than 15 percent, watercourses, and floodplains. Any development in these areas should minimize intervention and maintain the natural condition except under extreme circumstances. Where practical, these features should be conserved as open space amenities and incorporated in the overall site design.			
Street Design/General Street Design Principles				
20	It is the intent of these guidelines to build streets that are integral components of community design. Public and private streets, as well as commercial driveways that serve as primary pedestrian pathways to building entrances, should be designed as the main public spaces of the City and should be scaled for pedestrians.			
21	Sidewalks should be 5-8 feet wide in residential areas and located on both sides of the street. Sidewalks in commercial areas and Pedestrian Business Overlays should be a minimum of 14-18 feet wide to accommodate sidewalk uses such as vendors, merchandising, and outdoor seating.			
22	Streets should be designed with street trees planted in a manner appropriate to their function. Commercial streets should have trees that complement the face of the buildings and that shade the sidewalk. Residential streets should provide for an appropriate tree canopy, which shadows both the street and sidewalk and serves as a visual buffer between the street and the home. The typical width of the street landscape strip is 6-8 feet. This width ensures healthy street trees, precludes tree roots from breaking the sidewalk, and provides adequate pedestrian buffering. Street trees should be at least 6 1/4" caliper and should be consistent with the City's landscaping, lighting, and street sight distance requirements.			

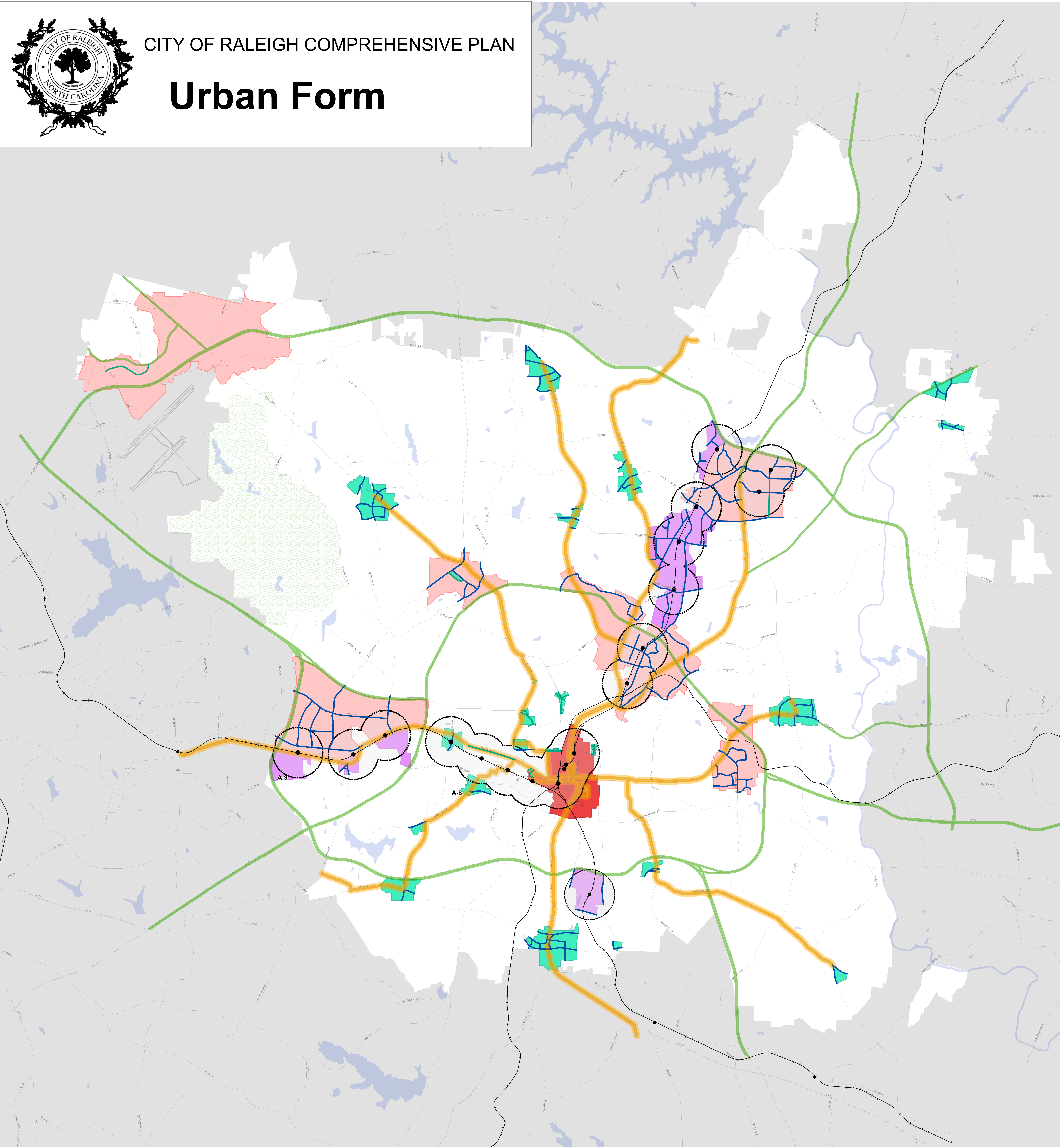
#	Guideline	
Street Design/Spatial Definition		
23	<p>Buildings should define the streets spatially. Proper spatial definition should be achieved with buildings or other architectural elements (including certain tree plantings) that make up the street edges aligned in a disciplined manner with an appropriate ratio of height to width.</p>	<div><div><p>Proportions</p><p>RATIO 1:1 RATIO 1:3 RATIO 1:6</p></div><div><p>Techniques</p><p>BY FACADE BY RECESS LINE BY LANDSCAPING</p></div></div> <p>The enclosure of the street is most effectively accomplished using buildings placed behind the sidewalk.</p> <div><p>Appropriate Street Enclosure</p><p>Inappropriate Street Enclosure</p></div>
Building Design/Facade Treatment		
24	<p>The primary entrance should be both architecturally and functionally on the front facade of any building facing the primary public street. Such entrances should be designed to convey their prominence on the fronting facade.</p>	<div><p>Horizontal Tiers</p><p>Top</p><p>Middle</p><p>Base</p><p>Vertical Bays</p></div>

#	Guideline
25	<p>The ground level of the building should offer pedestrian interest along sidewalks. This includes windows, entrances, and architectural details. Signage, awnings, and ornamentation are encouraged.</p> 

#	Guideline
Building Design/Street Level Activity	
26	<p>The sidewalks should be the principal place of pedestrian movement and casual social interaction. Designs and uses should be complementary to that function.</p> <p>Moore Square is a good example of a walkable urban village with a continuing tradition of street-level retail and well-designed facades that create a wonderful place.</p>  <p>Small sidewalk displays help bring the indoors outside and add pedestrian interest.</p> 



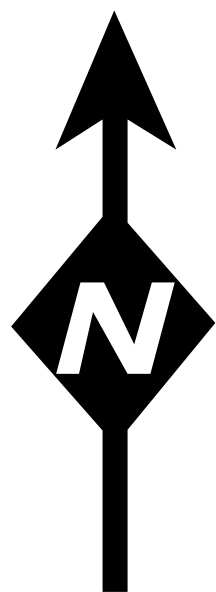
Urban Form



MAP UD-1

- Centers**
- Mixed-Use Center
 - Transit Oriented District (TOD)
 - City Growth Center
 - Downtown
- Transit**
- Transit Stop Half-Mile Buffer
 - Transit Stop

- Corridors**
- Transit Emphasis Corridor
 - Parkway Corridor
- Frontages**
- Urban Street Frontage
 - Main Street Frontage

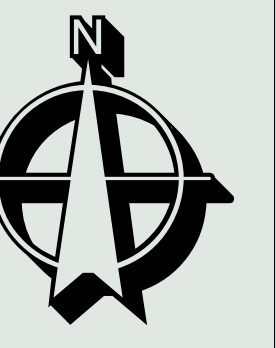
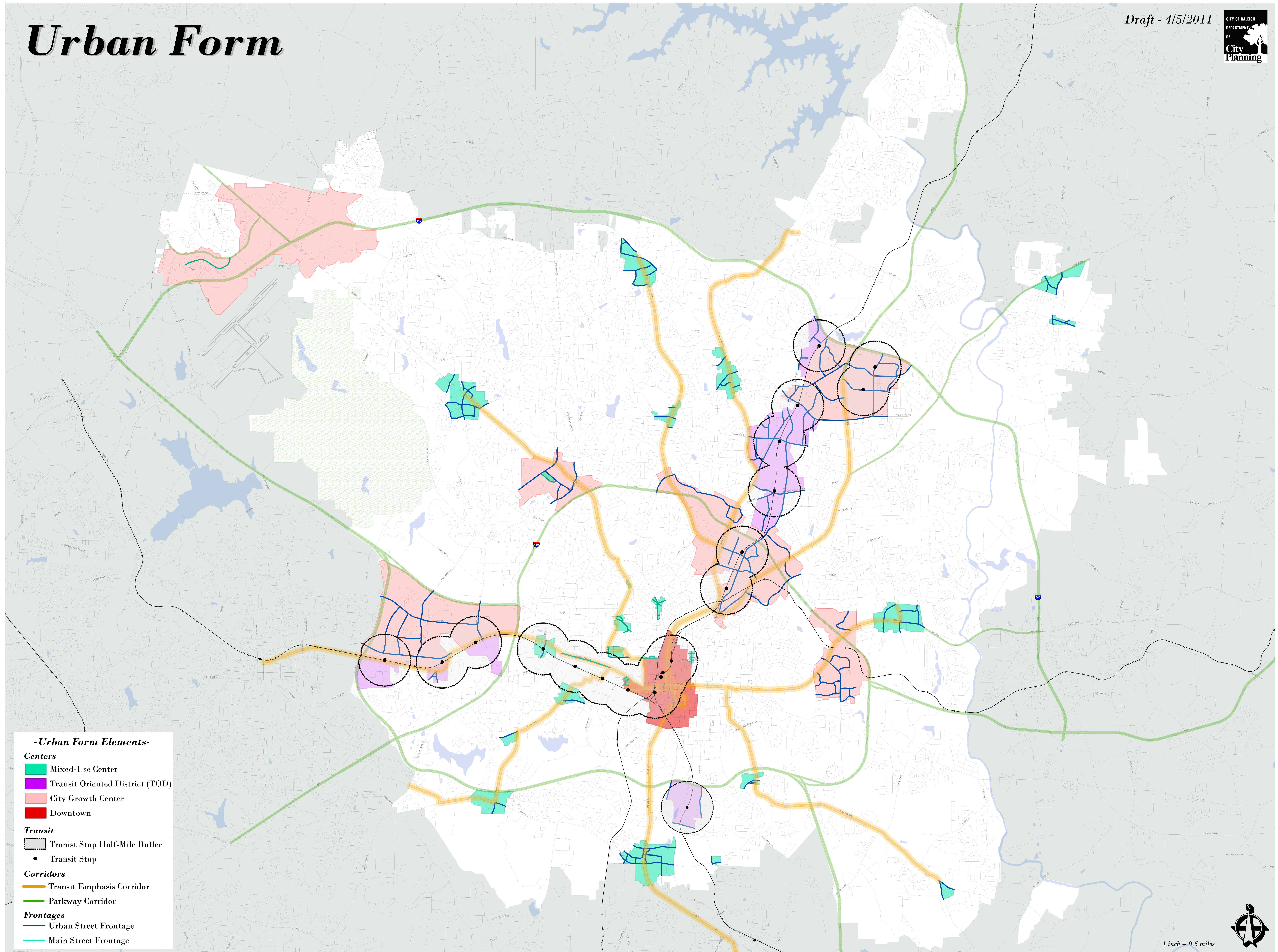


0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Map created 4/5/2011 by the City of Raleigh
Department of City Planning

Urban Form

Draft - 4/5/2011



1 inch = 0.5 miles